

JUNE 13, 2011 BY **EVANGELISMCOACH****1 COMMENT**

How to kill spiritual thirst

You've probably seen it:

An opening in a conversation when a non Christian expresses their spiritual insight, or [opens up about some restlessness in their heart](#).

Then well-meaning Christians become a one-way torrent of gospel information about what a person needs to believe and why other religions are wrong.



Or maybe you've seen this:

Your small group has two first time guests who have come to check out a little more about Christianity, but a well meaning Christian tries to get them saved the first night by explaining the need to be washed in the blood of the lamb to satisfy the wrath of a God who hates sin.

These are conversation killers.

These are spiritual thirst killers. The tender shoot is growing forth and just got squashed.

I've seen it in small groups I've been a part of, conversations that I've learned from, and mistakes that I have made.

How not to kill spiritual thirst.

When a person first [opens up to their spiritual need](#), it's the time to have a genuine spiritual conversation about their struggles and questions.

Allow God room to work in the life of the person with whom you are talking – we don't have to rush the process, we are invited to help it along.

1. Love means you listen

Listening shows love. Impatiently spewing forth doctrinal truth to correct their mis-beliefs does not.

If someone has become vulnerable enough to freely talk about their spiritual thirst, or even share their current beliefs about life, death, or other spiritual themes, you need to listen.

In small group gatherings, love means listen to the beliefs and opinions of all who express them. It's important to listen to their story, not think about your own or how you need to correct them.

In personal conversation, love means listen to your friend and understand them.

Tolerance is not approval, but giving space to people to express their views even if we disagree. There is a time to engage in critique, but not at the first glimpse.

2. Love means you ask great questions

Asking great questions invites your conversational partner to express their opinions and beliefs. Asking questions invites further conversation, further sharing, and further insight into people.

Good questions uncover the truth about what people really think, and they create the opportunity to share life and truth together.

I like to follow my curiosity when people express something I don't understand:

- How does that comfort you?
- How did you discover that?
- How does that happen?

I also like to follow my curiosity about where beliefs might cause internal conflict:

- Does that answer all your questions?
- Where do you wish you had more answers?
- Can you elaborate on that?
- How is it working for you?
- How does your position X work with your conviction Y?
- How does that satisfy the longing that I hear you express?

Drilling down with “how” questions, without it being an interrogation, allows a conversation to grow deep, and creates the safety and security between you to allow for the formation of new ideas.

Don't kill spiritual thirst, water it.

Rather than squashing spiritual thirst in my enthusiasm to share the gospel, I listen and use questions to help the spiritual conversation along.

I call this watering – nurturing a spiritual journey to Jesus.

I trust in the sovereignty of God to be at work.

By giving space for small group visitors or my friends to express their beliefs or even disagreements about Christianity, I eventually earn the right to express my belief and engage them in meaningful and safe discussions.

I get the chance to answer questions, shape ideas, and help a person in their discovery of Jesus. But only after helping them feel safe talking with me.

You might like to read . . .

- [Spiritual Thirst - The Key Clue to Faith Conversations](#)
- [30 Days of Prayer: Day 19 - Woman at the Well](#)
- [30 Days of Prayer: Day 16 - Spiritual Thirst](#)
- [Do you make these 3 personal evangelism mistakes?](#)